

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BAGHDA 00639 251015Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 /093 W
-----129815 251023Z /10

R 250811Z MAR 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5898
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0639

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, IZ, LE, SY
SUBJECT: IRAQI VOLUNTEERS IN LEBANON: FACT
OR PROPAGANDA?

REF: BAGHDAD 0629

1. SUMMARY: BAGHDAD EVENING TELEVISION, MARCH 22, CARRIED
A HALF HOUR PROGRAM SHOWING WHAT WERE PURPORTED TO BE IRAQI
"VOLUNTEERS" GOING TO THE SCENE OF FIGHTING IN SOUTHERN
LEBANON. THERE IS SOME QUESTION WHETHER THESE WERE ACTUALLY
VOLUNTEERS EN ROUTE OR AN ELABORATELY STAGED PROPAGANDA
EXERCISE. IRAQI REGIME MAKING EFFORT TO CREATE MILITANT
IMAGE. END SUMMARY.

2. WEDNESDAY EVENING, MARCH 22, IRAQI TELEVISION BROADCAST
A THIRTY MINUTE PROGRAM ALLEGEDLY SHOWING YOUTHFUL IRAQI
VOLUNTEERS GOING TO THE LEBANESE FRONT. THE PROGRAM WAS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BAGHDA 00639 251015Z

APPARENTLY FILMED ON THE SCENE IN THE WESTERN DESERT NEAR
THE IRAQI-SYRIAN BORDERS. THE FILM SHOWED APPROXIMATELY 200
YOUNG MEN, CLEARLY OF MILITARY AGE AND APPEARANCE, BUT IN
CIVILIAN DRESS, INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE WEARING A KENT
CIGARETTE T-SHIRT. THOSE QUESTIONED IDENTIFIED
THEMSELVES AS STUDENTS OR YOUNG MEN WHO HAD VOLUNTEERED
"TO LIBERATE OUR OCCUPIED TERRITORIES...AND ALL LEBANON."

SUBSEQUENT SCENES SHOWED THEM ENTERING BUSES WHICH MOVED OUT ACROSS THE DESERT. BAGHDAD PRESS OF MARCH 23 CARRIES STORY QUOTING CAIRO PRESS CLAIM THAT IRAQI VOLUNTEERS ALREADY IN LEBANON AND HAVE JOINED FIGHTING IN RANKS OF JOINT PALESTINIAN-LEBANESE FORCES.

3. THERE IS SOME SUPPORT IN RUMOR MILL FOR VIEW THAT SYRIA AND IRAQ HAVE AGREED TO TERMS FOR PASSAGE OF IRAQI VOLUNTEERS. SYRIAN AND SOVIET AMBASSADORS HAVE BEEN MEETING HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS WITH UNUSUAL FREQUENCY, SUGGESTING THAT SOVIETS MAY HAVE FACILITATED AN AGREEMENT. MEDIA, HOWEVER, CONTINUES ANTI-SYRIAN PROPAGANDA.

4. BAGHDAD CITY WAS BLACKED OUT FOR AN AIR RAID DRILL EARLY IN THE EVENING OF MARCH 22, ALTHOUGH RADIO BROADCASTS WERE NOT INTERRUPTED. THE DRILL LASTED FOR SLIGHTLY LESS THAN AN HOUR AND APPEARED TO COINCIDE WITH A MILITARY EXERCISE CONDUCTED AT MUTHANNA AIRPORT IN WEST BAGHDAD. STREETS IN THE AREA OBSERVED BY USINT OFFICERS WERE QUIET, AND THE ONLY MOVEMENT CAME FROM HELICOPTERS HOVERING OVER THE GOVERNMENT AREA ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE TIGRIS RIVER.

5. COMMENT: CLOSE OBSERVATION OF THE TELEVISION PHOTOGRAPHY RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MOVEMENT OF THESE "VOLUNTEERS." SOME OF THE BUSES WERE CLEARLY ONLY PARTIALLY FILLED. ACCOMPANYING LATE MODEL VERSIONS OF THE STANDARD IRAQI MILITARY CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BAGHDA 00639 251015Z

TYPE TRUCKS, BUSES APPEARED TO BE EMPTY OF EITHER TROOPS OR SUPPLIES. THE VOLUNTEERS, ALTHOUGH OF MILITARY AGE, AND IN APPARENT GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION, WERE, TO A MAN, CLAD IN STANDARD CIVILIAN DRESS AND SEEMED TO BE ON A HOLIDAY OUTING RATHER THAN ON THE WAY TO THE SCENE OF HEAVY FIGHTING. IF IRAQ HAS INDEED SENT VOLUNTEERS TO AID THE PALESTINIANS IN SOUTH LEBANON, THEIR DEPARTURE FROM IRAQ CAN ONLY BE TERMED BIZARRE.

6. REGIME HAS GONE TO SOME EFFORT TO CREATE THE ILLUSION OF READINESS AND TENSION IN BAGHDAD. CLAIMS THAT IRAQI VOLUNTEERS HAVE ENGAGED ISRAELI FORCES OBVIOUSLY FIT THIS THEME. MORE CREDIBLE IS THE DISPATCH OF 40-MAN MEDICAL TEAM INCLUDING 26 DOCTORS, WHO REPORTEDLY ARRIVED BEIRUT ON MARCH 22. MINISTER OF HEALTH WAS AT BAGHDAD AIRPORT TO SEE THEM OFF.
MACK

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BAGHDA00639
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780131-1234
Format: TEL
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780325/aaaaavaf.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 85aeadb-dc288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BAGHDAD 629
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3204275
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IRAQI VOLUNTEERS IN LEBANON: FACT OR PROPAGANDA?
TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, PROP, IZ, LE, SY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/85aeadb-dc288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014